

CONGRESS

The Big-Mouth Problems

"Once the dust has settled and the CIA is no longer Page One news, many members are likely to lose interest. Closed-door meetings don't allow Congressmen to make speeches or issue press releases or titillate their constituents with inside stories." So argues Democratic Representative Les Aspin of Wisconsin. His cynical point is that a congressional committee to oversee CIA operations would be a washout in five years because its members would lose their enthusiasm as soon as the CIA was no longer a big story.

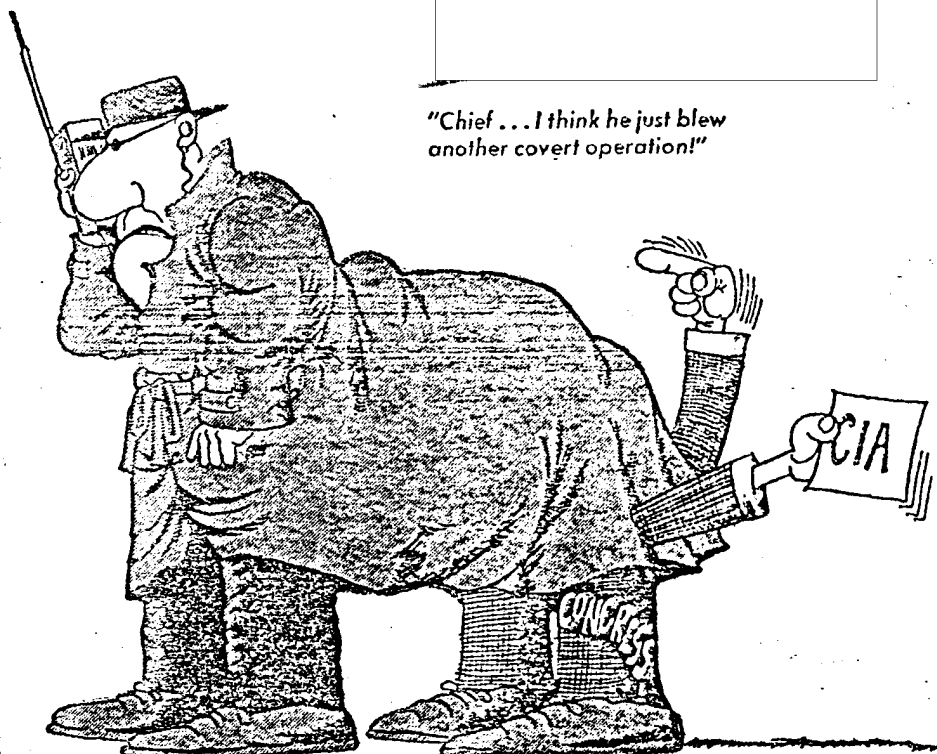
Aspin may be right, but last week the CIA was Page One news practically every day, thanks to a steady flow of leaks, apparently from members and staff of the House Intelligence Committee. The committee is scheduled to issue by next week a report on its six-month investigation of the CIA—but there may not be much left to reveal by then. Bits and pieces of the 340-page report were leaked to newsmen. Among the disclosures:

► In the late '50s, trying to sour Indonesia's late President Sukarno on the Soviet Union, the CIA produced a film purporting to show him engaging in sexual relations with a woman in Moscow—and planned to pass off the movie as a KGB blackmail attempt. Before the film could be circulated in Indonesia, however, the CIA had second thoughts and canceled the dirty trick.

► Though the Ford Administration valued at \$32 million the military aid supplied by the CIA to anti-Soviet factions in Angola, the report charges that it was really worth much more. High Administration officials called the accusation a bum rap, insisting that .45-cal. pistols were valued as low as \$5 apiece and .30-cal. semiautomatic carbines as low as \$7.55 because they were World War II surplus, and have drastically depreciated.

► Soon after U.S. Ambassador to Cyprus Rodger P. Davies was assassinated in Nicosia in 1974, U.S. intelligence officials reported the killers' identity to high Cypriot officials, but the assassins are still serving in the Cypriot government security forces. Officials of both the CIA and the State Department denied the story, saying the U.S. does not know who killed Davies.

► The CIA last year had eleven agents clandestinely collecting intelligence overseas while posing as journalists for U.S. and foreign news organizations. A somewhat similar disclosure was made by former ABC Correspondent Sam Jaffe, who has admitted that he reported regularly to the FBI while covering the United Nations in the late



"Chief... I think he just blew another covert operation!"

1950s and Moscow in 1961-65. He claimed to have been told that the CIA once drew up a list of 40 to 200 journalists who had cooperated with the agency. The claim was denied by the CIA, House and Senate investigators, and two prominent journalists named by Jaffe: Anchormen John Chancellor of NBC and Walter Cronkite of CBS.

A sizable section of the committee's final report—also leaked—faults Secretary of State Henry Kissinger for overriding the objections of CIA and State Department experts to covert operations in Angola and Italy. Kissinger is further berated, to the extent of 80 or so pages, for trying to withhold secret information from the committee—in part because he feared it might be leaked.

Public Secrets. The week of leaks helped focus the secrecy problem as the Senate Government Operations Committee opened hearings on how to improve congressional oversight of the CIA. The Administration favors a single joint committee if only because separate House and Senate committees would double the likelihood of leaks. But congressional leaders argue that oversight might be improved if two committees were in competition.

Idaho Democrat Frank Church, who heads the Senate Intelligence Committee, insisted that a congressional oversight committee must have the right to make public CIA secrets, upon a majority vote.

The Administration seems willing to keep the committees informed of CIA activities. Indeed, Ford will pledge such cooperation in a message on intelligence to Congress within the next few weeks. He will also issue a series of Executive orders that, among other things, will forbid the CIA to spy on Americans, except in defined cases involving the agen-

cy's own security, and get involved in assassination plots. In turn, the Church committee will propose that the Executive orders be written into law, so they cannot be revoked by a future President.

But the Administration adamantly opposes a proposal by Church and Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield that the oversight committees be notified before the CIA launches a covert operation—not afterward, as is now the case. The change would make it easier for Congress to veto an operation by cutting off funds, as the Senate did last December in the case of Angola. Said one White House aide: "There's a constitutional problem. The Supreme Court has held that the President is the 'sole organ' of foreign affairs. You can't have 535 Secretaries of State." There is also a practical and so far insoluble problem—those persistent leaks.